

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION INC.

This letter is addressed to the 26 clubs of the Sutherland Shire Football Association Inc;
(although we acknowledge that most of these clubs are not causing us any problems)
Jeff Stewart, the General Manager of Shire Football;
and to John Rayner, the General Manager of Sutherland Shire Council.

Wednesday 1 February 2012

Dear Presidents/Secretaries,

The volunteers of Sutherland Shire Hockey Association who give up their time, and spend Association money, to prepare and maintain the hockey fields at Jenola are at their wits end.

For many years now football players of all codes have thoughtlessly been causing damage to the only three grass hockey fields in the Shire used for women's and junior hockey. We have tried appealing to individual players and asking them to please leave the fields, we have notified Council and rangers have been sent to tell players to leave, we have approached soccer clubs and asked them to remind their players not to use the hockey fields – all to no avail. Not only were all our appeals ignored, we were frequently confronted with spitting, foul language and abuse from the people illegally using the hockey fields.

Last year Council went to some expense erecting signs at each entry point of the fields, four in all, quite clearly setting out permissible and illegal use of these fields. They may as well have used the funds to set up a beer tent and invite everyone down! We are all well aware that 2011 was a very wet winter season, with frequent blanket closure of all sporting grounds in the Sutherland Shire. However, the new signage and ground closures did nothing to deter the (mostly) soccer players from utilising Jenola when their home grounds were closed, and in fact they are using the fields for training and games most days/evenings throughout the year, including Sundays. As a consequence when we were able to play we were faced with severely damaged and dangerous playing surfaces, which caused a number of serious injuries to our players.

To add insult to injury (quite literally, in some cases) we were unable to play some of our finals series at Jenola because soccer players training there had caused such extensive damage that the fields were considered unplayable. There is not much sportsmanship evident in the actions of one sport spoiling the enjoyment of another.

Apart from the problems set out above, we also encounter players tearing down protective pickets around the goals where new turf has been laid, and sprinklers and hoses removed or disconnected when we are trying to keep the new turf alive.

After 70 years of hockey at Jenola we would like 2012 to be an enjoyable year for all our players and administrators, and having well-maintained playing fields is a priority for us.

To this end, we are prepared to collect evidence of illegal users with photos and vehicle registrations, and pass the information on to Council for them to prosecute as they see fit.

Our hope is that we will not need to take these drastic actions, and that all soccer players in the Sutherland Shire will be made aware by their governing body that their continued use and abuse of Jenola Hockey Fields is neither legal nor in the best interests of either sport.

Yours in Sport,

Carol Harriss
Secretary
Sutherland Shire Hockey Association

To:

Bangor Football Club; Bonnet Bay Football; Bundeena Maianbar Soccer Club; Barden Ridgebacks Football Club; Como West Jannali Junior Sports Club; Cronulla RSL Youth Soccer Club; Cronulla Seagulls Football Club; The Engadine Crusaders Football Club; Engadine Eagles Football Club; Grays Point Soccer Club; Gwawley Bay Football Club; Gynea United Football Club; Heathcote Waratah Football Club; Kirrawee Kangaroos Football Club ; Lilli Pilli Football Club; Loftus Yarrawarrah Rovers Football Club; Marton Hammers Football Club; Menai Hawks Football Club; Miranda Magpies Football Club; Caringbah Redbacks Football Club; North Sutherland Rockets Football Club; Bosco Football Club; St. Patricks Football Club; Sylvania Heights Soccer Club; Sutherland Titans Football Club.

Also : Jeff Stewart, General Manager, Shire Football
John Rayner, General Manager, SSC